

Holland
September 13, 1965



Dear Reverend Mother and Sisters:

This informal letter will be an attempt to keep our Sisters posted on the highlights of our year across the Atlantic. Many thanks to those who came to Logan Airport to see us off. It made the "take-off" easier.

We had a very pleasant flight. The cruising altitude was 33,000 feet. Time in the air was 5 hours, 20 minutes. We arrived in Ireland at 9:50 a.m. Shannon time.

Our first and lasting impression of Ireland was a warm and very friendly people, a very green landscape, pretty Irish girls and handsome lads, darling children (the altar boys wear short pants and their cassocks only come to their knees!) and scattered showers.

We received a cordial welcome from the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary. The Reverend Mother had been befriended by the S.S.J.'s of Philadelphia when in America. We had breakfast with her in the morning--juice, cereal, bacon and eggs, home-made bread, home-made butter, home-made jelly and tea. At present their Sisters are stationed in Africa, but their American foundation will send Sisters to South America.

An interesting visit was to the exhibition of Apostolic work by the ladies from eleven neighboring villages and towns. They volunteer to make vestments, altar linens, socks, sweaters, etc. for the missionaries from the vicinity who are in foreign lands. The priests apply for what they need, and the Society sends the articles to them. The amazing thing was the amount of beautiful work these women had prepared in a year--beautiful sets of vestments, all colors, hand-made lace on albs and surplices, hundreds of pairs of socks, etc. It was certainly a credit to their faith and their devotion to the missions.

Once in Dublin, we immediately took a tour of the city and saw St. Stephen's Green with DeValera's residence, O'Connell Bridge and O'Connell Street, both named for the great emancipator of Ireland, Daniel O'Connell, Trinity College, where we viewed the original Book of Kells, an 8th century illuminated copy of the four Gospels, said to be the most perfect manuscript in the world. Even examined with a magnifying glass, no flaw can be found in it. We went on to Christchurch, a beautiful and immense structure which was once a Catholic church, but is now held by the Church of Ireland (the Irish counterpart of the Church of England.) The houses in Dublin are mostly Georgian in style; they would remind you of movies staged in New York in the 1900's. Right in the midst of the busy section of downtown Dublin, we met Sisters Catherine Edmund and Anna Catherine's sister, Mary Hayes, who is visiting

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Ireland with three friends from Springfield. We had a great reunion right then and there!

On a visit to the Irish Hospital Sweepstakes Headquarters, we were met by a lady from Pluntree Road, Springfield, who recognized our habit. She was enthusiastic about the new Mont Marie and said, "After visiting the Infirmary and Novitiate, I do not regret one penny I gave to that cause. Everyone in the diocese is proud of it."

We left Dublin on a rainy morning, traveling to the airport by taxi with rope holding down the trunk cover because of so much luggage! A fellow passenger was a Sister Fiacre, a clinical psychologist from Ireland stationed in Nigeria. Sister said that Nigeria's problem is a labor problem: The people will not work. Nigeria is considered an advanced region in Africa; people there are well educated. Sister said: "A.B.'s and B.S.'s there are two a hapenny, but the people consider work beneath them." Another interesting figure we met was the Premier of Prince Edward Island, Canada, who is a Presbyterian and a great old man!

Our tour of London included: the Tower of London which is a massive cluster of stone buildings surrounded by an immense fortification and moat. It has never been taken by an enemy. The crown jewels are kept there now. Picadilly Circus (the name circus is retained in the Latin and means "Square") is another Times Square. Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, Trafalgar Square, Westminster Catholic Cathedral, St. Paul's, Samuel Johnson's House, Dicken's Home, Scotland Yard, St. James's Palace, the burial place of John Bunyan and Daniel Defoe, and the street where Milton lived. We went to Mass at St. Patrick's which is the University Chapel, in Soho Square. A plaque has been erected here in thanksgiving for a singular event. In 1941, when London was being bombed, a bomb fell on this church and lodged deep in one of its massive columns without exploding.

The next day took us to the Shakespeare Country, a beautiful ride through the English countryside. The pastoral scenes cannot be much changed since Milton's time! We stopped at Warwick Castle, a feudal castle, very lovely, surrounded by a moat, with beautiful gardens in the interior court. It is owned by the Duke of Warwick who can no longer afford to live in it. He lives in the servants' quarters and the castle is open to the public. We next visited Oxford University where the school year is 96 days in length and the students meet with their tutors one-half hour a week; they are strictly on their own, and they are not obliged to attend any classes. However, they must pass very difficult semester examinations to procure their diploma.

Anne Hathaway's cottage is a rather large one. It is 400 years old and has been restored in period furnishings. Its low ceilings and the original oak panels, together with colorful flower gardens make it very attractive. We sat on the wooden seat where Will courted Anne! Shakespeare's Birthplace is a combined house and shop; his father was a wool merchant. It is only recently that great interest has been shown in keeping Stratford-on-Avon as an historical site. A new theatre has just been completed for the production of Shakespearean plays. This trip ended our stay in England. On to Amsterdam!

Holland is truly a storybook country. Everything you've read about it is true! It is so picturesque, so delightful! Canals run through the streets; there are quaint bridges everywhere;

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the people are friendly and happy! In short, we love it. There is so much to tell about what we've seen and done here in Holland that it will simply have to wait until the next installment of "The Journal of Three Souls." Please keep us in your prayers; you are all in ours.

Sincerely yours in Jesus Christ,

Sister Loretto Joseph
Sister Eleanor Maria and
Sister Maria Assumpta

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Paris, France
November 11, 1965



Dear Reverend Mother and Sisters:

This Armistice Day is one holiday that the French and Americans observe together. Paris had its parade today, too, and General De Gaulle arrived at the Champs-Élysées to place a wreath of flowers at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. As the General approached the spot, an atmosphere of reverent silence pervaded the whole square. The General seemed to tower above all his compatriots, so it was not too difficult to get slides to add to our collection which we will be happy to share with you.

Sisters, Journal IV will be a collection of people and places!

PEOPLE!

Friday, October 15, dawned and it promised to be another day of library work and study. Such was not the case, however, and now we look upon it as one of the memorable dates of our European sojourn. When we arrived at 5:30 from the library, we were told by the secretary at the entry that an American priest was here to visit us. He was being entertained, she added, by two other Sisters of Saint Joseph, and--"Incidentally," she said, "he is wearing a big ring!" Yes, Sisters, you are right. We entered the *salle à manger* to find our own beloved Bishop who had flown from Rome to Paris to see us. You can well imagine our joy and happiness, our gratitude and appreciation for this privileged visit from His Excellency. Bishop, during the next three hours, talked to us about the Council, the problems of the Church Universal and our own studies and work here in France. We are deeply grateful to him for his sincere interest in our Community and his generosity to us. At 8:30 we had the privilege of introducing him to many of the Sisters in this international foyer who were delighted to converse with him in French and to know that he knew their respective bishops. We then escorted him through our double iron gate, down past the famous Paris Casino to Trinity Square where he took a taxi for his hotel. This visit was significant, not only for three Sisters of St. Joseph, but it did much to enhance the role of the Church in America.

We are far away from the States, yet occasionally we do have reminders of our family at home. It was on October 4 that we watched the Holy Father's visit to the U. N. on télé, relayed live via Oiseau-Matin (Early Bird) Europe's satellite. On the same day we had a visitor, a fine young man, Jim O'Donnell, nephew of Sister Patricia Anne and Sister Helen Patricia. Jim was on his way back to begin his final year at Louvain. He talked to us in French and told us of his many wonderful experiences here in France. He said that it would take three Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield to replace the presence of his two aunts at his ordination in Belgium. We assured Jim that the Sisters of Saint Joseph would be represented.

And, Sisters, that is not all! Here we are in the midst of Paris with its population of seven million people, and five minutes from us live Mr. and Mrs. Manney and their lovely family. Mrs. Manney is the niece of Sister Anita Maria. You will be happy to know that the

Manneys invited us to dinner, and their beautiful children, Patrick, Henry, and Cecilia (age 6) gave us lessons in French. Little Ceil is a darling child and begged us to come back for another visit so that she could teach us a French dance. Mrs. Manney served us a delicious dinner, and both they and we were delighted with this pleasant evening. Thank you, Sister Anita Maria, for introducing us to your family.

Now for the PLACES!

Join us for last Sunday afternoon's tour. It began behind the Cathedral of Notre Dame in what is called the Memorial of the Deportation. This is a monument perpetuating the memory of the 200,000 French Jews exterminated by the Nazis in the War of 1939-1945. Entering the crypt, you see a long, narrow stone enclosure. In the center of this rests the tomb of the Unknown Deported; on both side walls are facets of crystal representing the deported victims, one crystal for each person. At the very extremity of the enclosure shines one bright light, the ray of hope, which burned in the French soul during that difficult time. On the right is a cell, a replica of the gas chambers in which as many as 150 persons were exterminated at one time by the infusion of a poisonous gas. Leaving the Memorial is an unforgettable scene. The Seine River, symbol of life and joy to the French, is seen through a projection of iron bars. This connotes the life that was snatched from these people by the Iron-clad rule of the Nazis during the period of the resistance. Now add to this picture the inscription "Pardonne; n'oublie pas," and you have the spirit of the French people.

A short walk down the famous Champs-Elysees brought us to the Arc of Triumph, the tomb of the Unknown Soldier and its eternal flame. We ascended by elevator to the top of the Arc of Triumph from where the star of avenues was clearly visible. Except for the area surrounding the beautiful rows of trees, majestic and calm, that lined these avenues, there was not an inch of unoccupied space. From this vantage point we could well imagine how Paris accommodates so many millions of people. The towering Sacre Coeur, Notre Dame Cathedral, and the Eiffel Tower all soared in the distance. When we descended the Arc, we noted the various friezes on all sides, some containing figures six feet high, which depict the battles of Napoleon. How the history of the French people is told in series of battles and wars!

It was now four o'clock so in jet-propelled fashion we walked to the Sainte Chapelle. In the late afternoon the windows of this chapel glow in all their beauty and splendour. This is the chapel built by Louis XII to contain the Sacred Relics. This chapel is one of the jewels of Gothic Architecture. After mounting the winding staircase, we beheld a scene of unforgettable beauty. There the stain-glass windows, standing fifty feet high, fashioned in diamond, oval and square shapes, retold the life of Our Saviour. The light streaming in from the West makes visible the thousand multicolored biblical scenes. Beneath these windows is a tiny cell-like oratory, where the King could attend Mass unobserved by the congregation. This magnificent chapel was the work of the artisans of the thirteenth century. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is celebrated once a year here and this is called the Red Mass for civil administration.

That concluded our Sunday afternoon tour! But come with us to class at The Sorbonne. We are enrolled here in what is called the Institut for teachers from foreign countries. The course takes place each day of the week except Friday from five to seven. We have four different

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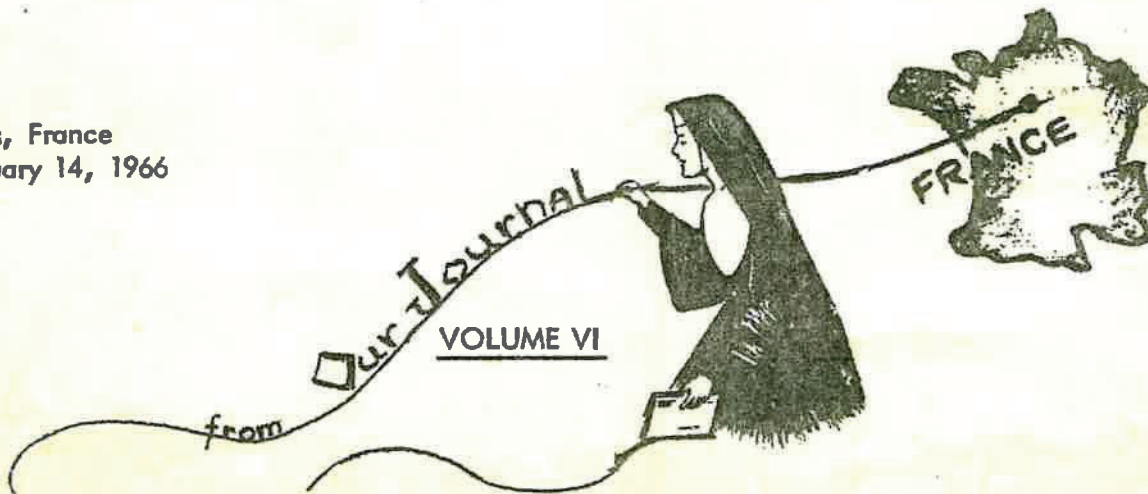
teachers and the subject matter is Contemporary French novel, poetry, and drama. The professor in charge of the French theater arranges to take the class to the plays being studied. You can visualize how we will enjoy doing that assignment. Virtually every nation seems to be represented. There are teachers from Germany, England, China, Japan, Denmark, Canada, many parts of Africa, and many states of the United States. Massachusetts, however, swells the ranks as there are ten young women, all graduates of Emmanuel College, pursuing their studies here. The Sorbonne is surrounded by many other renowned institutions. Across the street is the famous College de France where Jacques Maritain, Peguy, and so many others followed the philosophy courses of Henry Bergson; up the street is the Lycee Louis Le Grand where Paul Claudel received his award from Renan; and up the street a little farther is Saint Barbe where St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Francis Xavier went to school. These are the surroundings where we are so privileged to work, study, and travel.

Until our next Journal, let us pray for one another! A Happy Thanksgiving to all!
Think of us when you're enjoying Mr. Turkey!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Sister Loretto Joseph,
Sister Eleanor Maria,
Sister Maria Assumpta

Paris, France
January 14, 1966



Dear Reverend Mother and Sisters:

A happy and blessed New Year to all of you! Now that we are back in Paris, we are anxious to relive for you our memorable ten days in the Eternal City.

It was an Air France Flight at 9:45 a.m. on December 20 that transported us from Paris across the Alps to Rome. What a beautiful view was ours! As we sailed across a sea of clouds, we could see the snowcapped peak of Mont Blanc! In less than two hours we landed at DaVinci Airport where an enthusiastically waving hand greeted us, took our baggage, and led us to his car. This was "Danny," our guide, who was to be with us constantly, assisting us with his very comfortable car, his extensive knowledge of Italy, and his pleasant personality. For this unusual gift we are extremely indebted to Doctor and Mrs. John Cashin of North Adams. Their great generosity made it possible for four Sisters of St. Joseph to enjoy immeasurably the treasures of culture of this other world. We pray daily that God in His Goodness will reward these wonderful benefactors of our Community.

Danny then drove us to Via Nicola, very near the Vatican where we were to stay with the Sisters of St. Francis of Syracuse, and then on to a little Italian villa where we had the first of many pastas (spaghetti in all shapes and forms).

It was on this our very first afternoon in Rome that Danny led us down the Appian Way, past the Church of Quo Vadis where it is said that the foot print of Christ is imprinted on the pavement, to the catacombs of St. Callistus. This was an ideal introduction to Rome for we were vividly reminded of the magnificent heritage of our Catholic Faith. Here were the tunnels hewn out of volcanic rock where the Christians of the first century met and worshipped. Here was the sacred spot where the body of St. Cecilia was buried. Walking through this subterranean passage, we noted frescoes on the wall; still clearly visible were the Good Shepherd and the children in the fiery furnace. The next morning we attended Mass in the crypt of the Popes where eleven Popes had celebrated Mass and where eleven martyred Popes were buried. This was the background that made possible so many of the beautiful basilicas, churches, and memorials to Christianity that we would see in the following days. We shall try to give you the highlights of Christian and Classical Rome as we observed them.

After our visit to the Catacombs we continued down the Old Appian Way, which picture appears in every first year Latin book. It was almost impossible to believe that this was the road constructed by the Consul Appius Claudius in 312 B. C. Flanked by cypress trees, statues of the gods, sepulchral monuments, this "queen of roads" was filled with vestiges of bygone days. All of a sudden, we came upon--HORACE'S TOMB! Naturally, we had to stop, snap a picture, take a stone from the tomb, and salute this great Latin poet endeared to so many of us by Sister Mary Eugene.

During the following days we realized that Rome is truly impregnated with reminders of its ancient civilization. Side by side there lie a mass of historic ruins and many modern buildings. Almost from any vantage point in Rome can be seen the huge Colosseum, built about 72 A. D. We entered one of its eighty gates and looked down upon the spot where so many of the early Christians had been hurled to the ferocious beasts. It was in this Flavian amphitheatre that naval battles as well as chariot races were presented for the amusement of some 50,000 spectators. The exterior of the building with its four stories of ionic, doric, and corinthian columns is an imposing spectacle. It was an unforgettable experience to tread the soil made sacred by the blood of so many martyrs and declared a sacred spot by Pope Benedict XIV.

We next proceeded down the Via del Fori from where could be seen in the distance the Palatine Hill with its umbrella pines and the remains of the Imperial palaces. The car stopped and our expert guide, "Danny," announced: "Sisters, this is the Roman Forum." During the next two hours we ambled through the ruins of what centuries ago constituted the center of Roman public life. We mounted the steps of the ancient Senate House, passed under the Arch of Septimus Severus and on through the temple dedicated to Castor and Pollux. In one of the open courtyards there remained pedestals and statues of the Vestal Virgins whose heads had been severed, very likely by the early Christians.

That Rome had an advanced civilization even in the third century is evident from Caracalla's Baths which had its own method of thermal heating. As we roamed through these baths, we could easily imagine them as recreational centers. They accommodated 1600 bathers who would enter first the tepidarium, then the calidarium, and, lastly, the frigidarium. Now, these baths serve as summer theatres. More interesting, however, were the Baths of Diocletian, for from one of these Michaelangelo designed the Church of St. Mary of the Angels. As a matter of fact, the exterior of the church is the original Bath of Diocletian.

Among the other treasures of Classical Rome that we can never forget are: the Trevi Fountains, the most impressive of Rome's 3,000 fountains; the Circus Maximus; the Pantheon, built in 27 B. C. and a perfectly preserved temple; and the Palatine Hill where Cicero, Cataline, and Mark Antony all lived.

Our tour through Christian Rome began with the four major basilicas, each renowned in its own way. St. John Lateran, the Cathedral Church in Rome, is in the form of a Latin cross. This was the Church of the Popes until they moved to Avignon in 1307. The twelve massive statues of the Apostles on both sides of the central nave create a lasting impression. St. Mary Major Basilica, so called because it is the largest church in Rome dedicated to Our Lady, contains many magnificent mosaics, and particularly worthy of note are its two chapels considered among the most beautiful in the world, the Chapel of the Most Blessed Sacrament and that of the Madonna. Entirely different from these two basilicas is St. Paul's Outside the Walls. The majestic exterior of the church with its porticos of 150 columns, its colossal statue of St. Paul in the center court, its stately palm trees, the mosaics of the prophets on the exterior of the basilica itself contribute to the richness and grandeur of this jewel of architecture. The interior, equally imposing with its panelled ceilings, its medallions of the Popes including Pope John XXIII, and its mosaic of Christ reigning in glory in the apse, is exquisite.

Words fail us when we try to describe the ineffable beauty of the Queen of Basilicas, St. Peter's. The majesty of its exterior is striking. It rises above the spot where the body of St. Peter was buried.

The majesty of its exterior is striking. It rises above the spot where the body of St. Peter was buried. From the mighty dome designed by Michaelangelo, to which we ascended by elevator and a climb of some 500 stairs, we viewed the immense panorama of Rome. At various stages in our ascent, we could see at close hand the artistry of the mosaics. We looked down into the basilica itself and caught a general idea of its mammoth dimensions. The interior, so very rich in architecture, is a tribute to the great geniuses who through the centuries dedicated their talents to the service of God. The numerous marble altars, the many chapels, the Pieta of Michaelangelo, the famous canopy of Bernini over the Papal altar, the baroque setting for the Chair of St. Peter, his bronze statue are just a few of the priceless treasures of this Mother Church of Catholicism. The spirit of Pope John XXIII still lives! His memory is held in such reverence that Sister Maria Assumpta received a gentle kiss on her right hand from a little Italian octogenarian couple because she led them to the tomb of "Papa Giovanni XXIII." People are ever praying at this tomb, always adorned with flowers.

Not so significant for its size or its beauty as the basilicas, but still extremely important, is St. Peter's Church in Chains. Here we venerated the chains of the Prince of the Apostles, preserved in a bronze tabernacle; and we marvelled as we studied the gigantic Moses, masterpiece of Michaelangelo. Especially important for us Americans was a visit to St. Susanna's where we received, thanks to one of Bishop Weldon's letters of introduction, a very warm and cordial welcome from Father Dimond, the rector. St. Susanna's is the Parish Church in Rome for American Catholics.

We spent several hours in the Vatican museum where there is a vast and valuable collection of the works of art of all times. However, the incomparable work of art was for us the Sistine Chapel, constructed by Sistus IV in 1475. Its walls and vaulted ceiling are marvelously frescoed by the great Renaissance masters, but, once again, it is the genius of Michaelangelo which predominates. We, and everyone else in the chapel, remained speechless in contemplating his vast fresco of the Universal Judgment on the altar wall and those on the vault depicting episodes of Creation.

Christmas Eve was a day of pilgrimage for us. We set out early to visit the famous Sanctuary of Our Lady of Loretto. It was to this shrine that Pope John made his historic visit when he broke with tradition and went outside the Vatican State. The great church atop a high hill contains what legend says was the House of Nazareth, the home of Our Lady at the time of the Annunciation. A large grating encloses the house which has been placed just behind the main altar. The house is like a small chapel now, and has over the altar a lovely statue of Our Lady of Loretto richly ornamented with gold and jewels. The inscription over the altar adds much to the devotional atmosphere. It reads: Hic Verbum Factum Est. We remembered here especially the intentions of all our Sisters who have this title of our Lady in their name.

Did we ever think we would spend Christmas Eve in Rome and attend Midnight Mass at the Basilica of St. Mary Major! We arrived at 10:30 to be sure of a good seat. We succeeded even though it was the edge of the corner of the front pillar close to the altar. But, alas, in moments we were surrounded by native Sisters with their folding chairs, by thousands of joyous Italians determined to catch the first glimpse of the Infant when the Cardinal, celebrant of the Mass, jubilantly unveiled the Creche at the Gloria. It was at this moment we lost our seats, never to regain them. Visualize the picture if you can! There we were within three feet of the altar! However, the very last to receive Holy Communion were the S. S. J.'s of Springfield who as yet were unaccustomed to the Church enthusiasm of the Italians. At 2 a.m. when the Mass concluded we were aware that this was Christmas in another world.

Christmas day itself dawned, a beautiful, warm, sunny day! Our Holy Father was to celebrate an outdoor Mass at 11:15 in front of St. Peter's Basilica. Fortunately, we had reserved seats very close to the altar. At 9:45 the crowd that would eventually number 100,000 pilgrims from all over the world, including many on wheel chairs, began to gather. Soon the colorful band units in great numbers marched through the elliptical colonnades of 284 massive pillars into St. Peter's Square. The two fountains on either side of the square, the stately obelisk in the very center, the long avenue of the Conciliation, and an increasing multitude in the square itself--this was the view as we looked down; as we looked up, the television camera, the 140 statues on the colonnades, thousands of people atop the buildings on both sides of the basilica! Then appeared at the door of the basilica a retinue of Swiss Guards in brilliant orange and blue striped uniforms. The solemn moment was to follow! We beheld in person Our Holy Father, who ascended the steps of the portable altar to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. A sacred awe permeated this reverential throng as we all prayed the Mass in union with the Vicar of Christ and the millions of Catholics throughout the world on this Christmas day. After Mass Pope Paul went to the balcony from where he extended his Christmas wishes and his blessing, Urbi et Orbi. You may be very sure, that all of you, dear Mother and Sisters, the intentions of our Community, our Bishop, our dioceses, our families, and our schools were very specially remembered on this wonderful Christmas day.

Amidst this throng of 100,000 pilgrims in St. Peter's Square, three little Korean Sisters approached us. "You are not Sisters of St. Joseph from Springfield, Mother Borgia's Community, are you?" When we proudly said we were, their eyes filled with tears, and they said, "Oh, Mother and the Sisters at the Mont were so good to us when we visited our Sister Vincentina studying at Mont Marie." They were Sisters Angela and Caecilia, Caritas Sisters from Korea. Five minutes later a woman approached Sister Eleanor Maria and asked the same question, "Springfield Sisters of St. Joseph? I had your Sisters forty years ago in St. Joseph's in Newport, and I shall never forget the kindness of Sister Mary Charles." Her young daughter then added, "I, too, attended St. Joseph's until I had to move after the sixth grade. I just loved everyone of my teachers--Sisters Charles Joseph, Thomas Catherine, Mary Joseph, Edward Patrice, Cecilia John, and Philip John." These pilgrims were Mrs. Maney and her daughter Dalcie. The world is small!

Christmas Dinner 1965 was likewise a unique experience. We happily accepted an invitation to attend a dinner sponsored by the fifty Notre Dame University students studying here in Europe. It was extended to us by a Notre Dame Philosophy professor who recognized us as Sisters of St. Joseph "from the States." At the dinner were many friends of the University. The joy of the traditional Christmas dinner was enhanced by the toast of white wine and by the pleasant conversation of our table companions. Sister Loretto Joseph was in the midst of a group of Protestants, anxious to know all about religious life. Sister Eleanor Maria learned all about the Lay Apostolate Movement of Catholic College students from the Captain-elect of the Notre Dame Football team, Jim Lynch. Sister Maria Assumpta enjoyed the company of an international group, a priest from Ethiopia, one from Boston, and one from Lithuania. The gathering ended on a happy note as a little Italian trio went from table to table singing such old time favorites as "O Solo Mio."

It's difficult to say what we liked most about Italy, but certainly one of the most wonderful aspects of our trip was the visit to Florence. This city has a storybook atmosphere and has kept its Italian Renaissance flavor. Dominating one area is the magnificent cathedral of St. Maria del Fiore,

with its baptistry (a separate building, hexagonal in shape, about ten stories high) and its graceful bell tower designed by Giotto. Each of these structures has its own style, but they have in common their exterior decoration of marble of many colors placed in artistic geometrical designs. The cathedral is just immense and is crowned by the magnificent dome which inspired Michelangelo to design the dome of St. Peter's in Rome. The bronze doors of the baptistry, recently restored to their original gild, are a marvelous work of art depicting scenes from the New and Old Testament. The interior of the baptistry dome (the guide will illuminate it for five minutes for 100 lira!) is a brilliant mosaic of Christ in glory.

An interesting picturesque attraction in Florence is the Ponte Vecchio (Old Bridge) spanning the Arn River and dating back to the 10th century. It has two rows of shops built right on the bridge which are reserved for goldsmiths and jewelers. We took pictures there of natives and tourists. The people were quite willing to pose and gave their widest grin for the benefit of the cameraman! You may have seen pictures of this historic bridge, the only one in Florence not bombed by the Germans in the last war.

Visiting three of Florence's many famous art galleries occupied most of our time there. The Uffizi Museum, the Accademia, and the Palatine Gallery of the Pitti Palace hold many masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque periods. There was so much to see that we can do little more than name some of the outstanding works for you--by Raphael: Madonna of the Chair, Madonna of the Grand Duke, the Veiled Woman; by Titian: La Bella and Mary Magdalen; by Botticelli: Spring and the Birth of Venus; by Del Sarto: the Holy Family and the Descent from the Cross. We were really captured by the lovely Della Robbia to be seen not only in the galleries but in many churches and even in public squares. A distinct pleasure was seeing the masterful statue of David, by Michelangelo, as well as several of his unfinished works. Our return trip to Rome took us through Orvieto, a very ancient town whose history goes back to the Etruscans. Its crowning glory is a cathedral whose exterior is a wonderful work of colorful and intricate mosaics.

We saved the description of the highlight of our trip for the end, that is, Our Audience with Pope Paul VI.

The tickets for the Papal Audience showed it scheduled for Wednesday, December 22 and not Christmas Eve as we had expected. In great anticipation we went early to St. Peter's and assisted at Mass in the crypt at the tomb of St. Peter. Masses are nearly continuous all morning at several of the basilica's many altars. We had been advised to arrive early for the audience, so after Mass we went immediately to the Colonnade to take our places in line. Waiting there in the gathering crowd was Elaine Sullivan of Newport, who had come to Rome to spend Christmas with her brother, Father John Sullivan, who is at the American College. Swiss guards kept the crowd orderly with eye discipline; and, finally, we were allowed to enter the Vatican Palace where the audience was to be held. We found ourselves in a long room having a throne at one end, many rows of benches, and then standing room roped off into sections. With no ceremony at all, we were ushered into the last standing section where we stood watching the "emerging laity" pass us by and take front seats! There were people there from all over the world, in all kinds of dress from rich and formal to native Oriental. Much of the formality has been taken out of the audiences by the Pope's wishes and only a few women wore the traditional black veils. Many were bareheaded! Finally, a murmur began to be heard at the door, and the Holy Father entered, carried in his chair on the guards' shoulders. Everyone applauded, and the Pope

raised his hands in the familiar gesture of greeting. It was a thrilling moment, to see him so closely. He looks so frail, so slight of build. When he reached the front of the hall, he took his place at the throne and began to address the people. In the meantime, we found that we were allowed to move forward along the side aisle, and before long we were in a very good position to see and hear the Holy Father. As a matter of fact, we were close enough to see that he wore the famous red satin slippers. He gave a simple Christmas message in Italian, then in French, English, Spanish, and German. The talk was followed by the singing of the Credo by all present and the Papal Apostolic Benediction. We were so happy to hear the Holy Father say that this Benediction was extended to all those at home near and dear to us. You see that you were all present with us in spirit that day and shared in a special way in the Holy Father's blessing!

After his talk, the Pope came down to those in the front rows, spoke to some newlyweds and to an invalid, then took a baby in his arms. As he moved along from group to group, extending his hand to all who could reach him, one tall American SSJ with a long arm (Sr. L. J.!) was close enough to reach out and kiss his ring! You will have to try to imagine all this happening in the midst of clamor, shouting, and applause. The people are very enthusiastic and enjoy clapping and shouting, "Viva il papa!" Emotion runs high at these audiences.

A week from that day, again at Mass at St. Peter's, we were told that a public audience was scheduled for St. Peter's that morning. This meant perhaps 50,000 or 60,000 people would be present and tickets were not really needed. It was then that we realized that the other audience had been "special" with only 2,000 people there. Of course, we stayed to see the Pope once more. This time he was at a great distance from us, but we listened to his talk. He seemed to be in a very cordial spirit, almost jovial, and more relaxed this time. He welcomed many large groups from various parts of Italy who had come on pilgrimage to Rome, especially youth groups. You should have heard the shouts and applause that day! In giving his Papal Benediction, the Pope added, "This Benediction is extended especially to the sick, who are so dear to Us." So from across the sea went this special blessing of our Holy Father to our dear Sisters in the Infirmary and to the sick in hospitals or on the missions.

There were many religious present at this second audience, and the Holy Father addressed a part of his talk to them (us!). He said that the close of the Council marked the beginning of a new era and asked religious to "stir up in your minds and hearts fervor, devotion, renewal, and new hope, living the life of the soul with spiritual energy, being apostolic and faithful to the Lord."

With these encouraging and thoughtful words of the Holy Father, we will close this long Journal, assuring you all that, as you were remembered in all our prayers in the Eternal City, you have a continued daily memento in them here in Paris.

Sincerely in Christ,

Sister Loretto Joseph
Sister Eleanor Maria
Sister Maria Assumpta